



KIT FOR NEW PARENTS: Updated and Improved



The *Kit for New Parents* now includes a new brochure and sticker reinforcing the message of Talk.Read.Sing.® and early brain development.

The brochure gives parents quick tips on how to incorporate talking, reading, and singing into their young children's daily lives, while the sticker reinforces the message that young, developing brains need linguistic engagement to grow and become strong, and that spoken language is among the best ways to strengthen a child's brain.

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Camille's Corner

Camille Maben, Executive Director, First 5 California



As we approach the end of 2015, we conclude one of our most active and productive years. From the approval of First 5 IMPACT, our 2015 Summit, and the approval of nearly \$400 million in new funding from the state budget for children and families programs and services—2015 will be hard to top.

A few weeks ago, I had the opportunity to be part of a program at the Capitol where the names of the 66,000 current California foster children were read to bring attention to National Adoption Month and the many

children who wait for families, a significant number under the age of 5. So as we celebrate the successes of 2015, I am reminded of the incredible work we have to do in the years ahead.

Developing partnerships, educating the public on the power of the early years, and building on the work we have done to improve quality in all early learning and care environments will continue to be the cornerstone of our work.

Our agenda is more aggressive, our employees smart and hard-working, and our leadership experienced. Together, with the Commission, we will use this momentum to continue to find ways to adapt to our ever-changing fiscal and political landscapes to move our agenda forward. Our agenda? To work with our county commission partners and other stakeholders to provide the much-needed services and supports that will provide children and families with the ability to thrive in every aspect they deserve.

First 5 Commission Changes

In 2015, the Commission had several changes as we said goodbye to our Commissioners Casey McKeever and Magdalena Carrasco, whose terms had expired, and we welcomed Erin Pak to the Commission.

First 5 IMPACT

As mentioned above, earlier this year the Commission approved First 5 IMPACT, a \$190 million investment that is already gleaming attention around the nation

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In 1998, California voters passed Proposition 10—the California Children and Families Act—and declared the importance of investing in a better future for California's youngest children. For the past 17 years, the California Children and Families Commission (First 5 California) has established quality standards and invested in the development of programs and services emphasizing improvement in early education, child care, social services, health care, research, and community awareness. The vision of First 5 California is for all of the state's children to receive the best possible start in life and thrive.

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This interaction can change everything: vocabulary, learning, self-confidence, and futures.

The brochure and sticker, along with our *Advice for New Parents* book and DVD, the *What to Do When Your Child Gets Sick* book, the *Puppy and Friends* baby board book, Paid Family Leave brochure, and Poison Control brochure and magnet make the *Kit* an important resource parents can rely on to guide them through a child's first five years.

Available in English, Spanish, Cantonese, Mandarin, Vietnamese, and Korean, *Kits* can be ordered by calling one of our toll-free lines:

- English: 1-800-KIDS-025
- Spanish: 1-800-50-NIÑOS
- Cantonese: 1-800-597-9366
- Mandarin: 1-800-597-9366
- Korean: 1-800-597-9511
- Vietnamese: 1-800-597-9855

For bulk orders, contact your local First 5 county commission, or call First 5 California at 916-263-1348.*



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among the quality rating and improvement systems (QRIS) community. As we partner with all 58 counties on systems work, I am grateful for the expertise shared by our QRIS counties with others just beginning this work. The true collaborative nature of this work is amazing.

Media Campaign

The State Commission welcomed the return of Fraser Communications, which was awarded a new media contract to grow our brand and build on our award-winning Talk.Read.Sing.® campaign. Plans call for what promises to be another award-winning campaign, scheduled to launch in early 2016. The campaign is multifaceted and comprehensive, making it more of a social movement. It will include television and radio ads, a refreshed parent website, enhanced social media, and celebrity endorsements. Stay tuned!

Legislative Update

Inside, our legislative update touches on ongoing efforts to ensure all of California's young children and families are afforded every opportunity to receive high-quality early education and support services in all settings that will allow them to thrive into adulthood. We are working hard to be at the forefront to address the needs of our youngest children and their families through more funds, services, and resources.

County Visits

Lastly, as I wrap up my visits to all 58 county commissions, I have to reiterate how impressed I am by the individual commissions that are working with and for their local communities. On my visit to First 5 Butte County, I witnessed the success of the Butte Baby Steps home visitation program, a program that exemplifies the best of what First 5 represents. Enjoy the article inside.

As 2015 comes to a close, First 5 California wishes you a holiday season filled with love, laughter, family, and friends. We look forward to our continued partnership in 2016 and beyond.*



First 5 Express Back on Tour

The First 5 Express is back on tour with a new name, a new look, and the addition of high-tech activities. If you liked it before, you will love this year's First 5 experience even more!

The Express is a bilingual children's activity center that travels across California to inspire families with children ages 5 and younger to make healthy choices and better understand the importance of a child's earliest years. Families who visit the Express are primed with information and equipped with tools to make a difference in their children's lives.



This year's focus is on brain development and the importance of talking, reading, and singing with children from day one. Activities such as story time and sing-along sessions, coloring, and puzzles engage families in fun Talk.Read.Sing.® behaviors. Express tour staff lead the activities and provide tips and information for parents and caregivers to inspire the continuation of these healthy activities at home.

One new highlight is a "karaoke-style" sing station, a digital screen, and recording device that prompts families to choose a kid-friendly song to sing together. A video recording is made and e-mailed to the participants that can be shared via social media.

Giveaway items include hand puppets, bilingual story books, and musical instruments (maracas and kazoos). These items will be distributed to help support Talk.

Read.Sing.® In addition, the *Kit for New Parents* and the "Fast, Fresh, and Fun: Food from First 5" cookbook will be available.

The Express will be traveling across California, stopping in all 58 counties through May 2016. With the strong support and collaboration of the county commissions, the Express will visit county fairs, festivals, libraries, Family Resource Centers, and schools, to name a few. The setup is adaptable to indoor and outdoor spaces of different sizes, making it perfect for a variety of locations.

To see the Express in action, visit First 5 California's Parent Website for the tour schedule. To request a visit from the Express, please e-mail Jamiann Lopez at jlopez@ccfc.ca.gov with event details. *



First 5 IMPACT Planning and Support Continues

Since the state Commission's approval of First 5 IMPACT (Improve and Maximize Programs so All Children Thrive) earlier this year, the First 5 California (F5CA) staff wasted no time in executing a timely schedule to implement the five-year initiative with the counties and their partners.

At the beginning of October, First 5 IMPACT Phase 2 Application Planning Meetings were held in Sacramento, Fresno, Oakland, Red Bluff, and Santa Ana. A total of 127 participants from 49 counties attended the sessions.

Through various activities, county teams had the opportunity to reflect on their quality improvement (QI) journey and identify priorities and needs around the Seven Systems Functions in preparation for completing their Phase 2 applications. Counties also had the opportunity to meet in cross-county groups to share their challenges and receive feedback from others.

It was clear from the evaluation comments that the Planning Meetings were well-received by all counties, from the seasoned veterans implementing Race to the Top—Early Learning Challenge, to those just starting out on their QI journey.

Following up, a series of webinars were held focusing on each of the Seven Systems Functions. The content

was developed from feedback received at the Planning Meetings and included examples of how other states have effectively used quality rating and improvement systems, concrete examples of what Phase 2 Application responses might look like, and provided opportunities for several counties to share their successes and lessons learned.

Debra Silverman, Education Administrator with F5CA's Training and Continuous Quality Improvement Office, discussed what F5CA will be doing to support counties in their IMPACT work, including Regional Training and Technical Assistance Hubs.

David Dodds, Deputy Director of F5CA's Evaluation Office, discussed the benefits of collecting data on quality improvement, how to coordinate data systems, and what data will be required. Mr. Dodds also provided updates on the Data and Evaluation Survey being conducted and the upcoming data systems demonstrations by vendors.

Additional information, including the webinars, timelines, and other useful information about First 5 IMPACT is available at http://www.first5california.com/programs/programs_impact.html. *

Legislative and Tobacco Cessation Update

The California State Legislature's engagement in a comprehensive tobacco cessation and taxation agenda stalled at the end of the regular legislative session in September.

The First 5 California Commission and First 5 Association supported 12 bills sponsored by the Save Lives Coalition during the regular and special sessions. This comprehensive set of bills sought to restrict access to tobacco products, including electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes), promote cessation, and increase tobacco and tobacco-product taxes at the state and local levels as a cessation strategy.

Of this broad agenda, only one bill was signed into law: AB 216 (Garcia). This is a crucial first step in regulating the booming e-cigarette industry by prohibiting the sale of e-cigarettes to minors.

The 2nd Extraordinary Session on Healthcare did not end with the regular session, and the conference committee

may convene this winter prior to the Legislature reconvening in January. Regardless of timing for the special session, First 5 California expects another big push on the tobacco cessation bills.

However, we expect the tobacco tax conversation will most likely shift to the initiative process as the Save Lives Coalition has refiled its tobacco tax initiative. The new draft extends the definition of other tobacco products to include the modern face of tobacco consumption: e-cigarettes. This new definition would apply to existing tobacco taxes, such as Proposition 10, in addition to the new \$2.00-per-pack tax.

First 5 California is pleased that the Coalition plans to tax e-cigarettes as a prevention strategy. With youth e-cigarette consumption and child e-cigarette poisoning on the rise, this taxation strategy will be crucial in what is a huge growth industry for tobacco consumption. *

Butte Baby Steps: A Closer Look

Diana Sanchez, Program Manager, Butte Baby Steps

In 2009, First 5 Butte County funded Northern Valley Catholic Social Service (NVCSS) to implement the Butte Baby Steps (BBS) Program, a home visiting program based on the nationally recognized, evidence-based Healthy Families America (HFA) program that promotes nurturing and bonding relationships between caregivers and babies.

Guided by 12 critical elements, the HFA model also embraces the Strengthening Families Framework and the Five Protective Factors, thus making BBS an integrated approach to helping expectant and new parents get their children off to a healthy start.

BBS provides home visits based on the needs of individual families introduced to the program by a Family Assessment Worker who gets to know them in order to assess their strengths and needs. A Family Support Worker then provides weekly home visits to build rapport, and provides information, education, and support services before a baby arrives into the household. The Family Support Worker also can provide referrals, transportation to medical appointments, and the one-on-one support families need to grow into their role as parents.

The Family Support Workers promote positive parent-child attachment and bonding by incorporating engaging activities that focus on increasing parents' knowledge of their children's development and milestones. Family Support Workers also weave reflective strategies into their home visits to help families talk through problems, explore and consider new ideas, accentuate positive skills and strengths, identify personal feelings, and normalize parenting. BBS staff provides *The Partners for a Healthy Baby* curriculum and *The Gold Within* workbook that incorporates easy-to-use handouts and worksheets that follow the development of a child to promote family empowerment.

Many families find home visits to be fun, entertaining, and informative as BBS staff also can engage in activities



that include belly casting, salt dough impressions, and scrapbooking to capture the family's progress and growth during these exciting first years. In addition, family successes are celebrated through a progression of goals developed by parents on a quarterly basis. As an incentive, families also can earn "Baby Bucks" upon completion of their goals, which can then be redeemed at the Incentive Store located at the BBS office.

For office visits, BBS staff created a family friendly and welcoming atmosphere at the NVCSS' office to create a "Family Room" where families have access to age-appropriate toys and materials. Families are encouraged to build supportive networks outside the program and are invited to social functions throughout the year. The events occur in a variety of locations that include the NVCSS office, a community park, a local pumpkin patch, and the Butte County Library, to name a few.

Through BBS, staff work closely with young families and their children to ensure they have access to services and supports that will promote healthy, nurturing, and bonded relationships for life. ✨

First 5 California Collaborates with the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for African Americans

On October 29, 2015, Executive Director Camille Maben participated in the Faith Leaders Early Learning Training in Los Angeles. The training, in support of the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for African Americans, was hosted by the Southside Bethel Baptist Church, led by Pastor Frederick Howard, and was geared toward sharing evidence-based best practices throughout the African American community to help increase student achievement.

The gathering was kicked off by Initiative Executive Director David Johns, who spoke on the goals of the training, including partnering with communities across the nation to produce “a more effective continuum” of education programs for African American students from cradle to career. A particularly important component of this initiative is enhancing investments in high-quality early care and education programs for African American children.

Additional remarks were provided by Ms. Maben and Reverend K.W. Tullos, who spoke to the assemblage of local faith leaders and professionals on the importance of high-quality early childhood education and the significance of talking, reading, and singing to babies at the earliest possible stage of life.

During a panel discussion, Ms. Maben, along with the other panelists shared how faith leaders can be the brokers of information regarding the services and resources available for their congregations. Attendees discussed best practices and shared ways to advance child outcomes throughout the African American community.

Other speakers included Reverend K.W. Tullos, President, National Action Network Los Angeles and Dr. Marcus Bright, Education for a Better America. The training, with over 50 local leaders in attendance, achieved all its objectives. ✱

Educare Comes to California

First School Opens in Silicon Valley

On October 22, California celebrated the opening of the state's first Educare site: Educare California at Silicon Valley. The school opened in San Jose to great fanfare and high expectations as a model of modern learning for high-quality early education.

Many local and state dignitaries welcomed the grand opening of this highly anticipated facility, which will serve approximately 170 low-income children. The school provides students with the tools necessary to thrive in a setting that is as advanced as any other in the early childhood education field.

“Educare has a reputation for applying science-based strategies that will enable children to thrive now and in the future,” said Camille Maben, Executive Director of First 5 California. “Educare provides services that will serve children and their families extremely well as they progress in life.”

The campus also serves as a Teacher Professional Development Institute, incorporates 12 state-of-the-art classrooms, and contains other amenities, such as a



family resource center and a career academy for high school students.

With nationwide recognition as a model for employing state-of-the-art early learning standards, retaining highly trained teachers, and engaging our youngest citizens in the newest and best strategies, Educare will help the state advance its efforts to provide high-quality learning to children of greatest need. ✱